

*The*  
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*Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums,  
Letters to the Editor, etc.*

**Views and Opinions.**

**Bigotry and the B.B.C.**

I DEALT last week with the censorship as it exists with regard to the stage and the cinema. The British Broadcasting Corporation is not technically a censorship, yet so far as many controversial questions are concerned it does set up a very effective control. Were the B.B.C. an ordinary company, subject to the same competition to which other companies are subject, there would be no special ground for protest. But the B.B.C. has a monopoly conferred upon it by Parliament, it has no competitors, and it exacts from all users of wireless instruments what is virtually a tax. In terms of equity it should therefore act with strict impartiality where public opinion is concerned. But that is precisely what the B.B.C. has never done, particularly where religion is in question. It happens to be under the general directorship of a first-class religious bigot in the person of Sir John Reith, and he has allowed it to be made public in one of the B.B.C. year-books that it is one of the objects of his organization to prevent the decay of Christianity. That is no small task for anyone to attempt, but one must do Sir John the justice of saying that he has an intelligent appreciation of the only way in which a religion such as Christianity can be preserved. This is to take care that nothing is said which the duller listeners can take to be an attack on Christianity, and to keep them in ignorance of the facts, historical and other, about Christianity. So it happens that during the whole of its history the B.B.C. has never permitted a direct and uncompromising criticism of Christianity to be broadcast. Speeches which may be considered heretical have been permitted, but these have served the purpose of giving an appearance of liberality, and have thus masked the gradual extension of the time devoted to religious services and to religious addresses. And it has been avowed over and over again that Sunday is to be reserved as a day on which

nothing to which Christians can reasonably object may be broadcast. Those who do not like the dose of religion served out on Sunday may turn to the Continent—as most do who can. Or they are informed they can “switch off.” But no alternative programme is to be permitted. Neither is there to be any really direct reply made to the yards of religious “tripe” that is put on the air by parsons of different denominations.

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**A Protest and a Reply.**

This policy has not been allowed to pass without protest. We believe we were the first to set the example of this, and since then many papers have pointed out the injustice of the present policy. To all the B.B.C. presents a stubborn front. It declines to alter its methods, and it has, as we have shown from time to time, lied as to the volume of protest that it receives. It has been asked to test the question of an alternative service on Sunday, but declines. It prefers the historic Christian policy of falsification. The most striking example of B.B.C. tactics is illustrated by a recent correspondence with the Stockport Branch of the N.S.S. Its secretary, Mr. G. Burgess has written a number of letters to the B.B.C. and has been met with the usual reply that general satisfaction exists with regard to the programmes. In reply the Branch has organized a canvass of licence holders which showed that an overwhelming majority of them wished for an alternative programme on Sunday, but Sir John Reith evidently thinks that he and God will outvote any number of ordinary mortals. In answer to a recent letter on the usual lines from the Director of Programmes Mr. Burgess replied:—

We regret that it is not possible to reconcile your statement with the opinions held by the majority of listeners, when you state that the B.B.C. is broadcasting such programmes as are acceptable to the majority of listeners . . . Surely you cannot be ignorant of the practice of Sunday listeners tuning-in to Continental stations while the religious services are being broadcast . . . We were hoping that by this time the Board of Governors would have fallen into line with modern thought and practice as regards Sunday Observance. We have further to bring to your notice that many serious-minded people are becoming seriously alarmed at the policy of the B.B.C. in stifling the criticism of Free-thinkers, Rationalists, etc., and who have not had that toleration which one would expect from an organization such as you control. It is not good for a nation that criticism should be suppressed. Religion is a question that is very controversial, and the B.B.C. should not take sides, but give every and any section of the nation the same rights as the religious bodies . . . In this changing world every aspect of life should be exploited; no cultured race can afford to ignore the viewpoint of any section of the community . . . We need not remind you that some of the fanatical and absurd views of the Sabba-



tarians in the past on the question of Sunday Observance would, if persisted in, be laughed out of existence.

Copies of this was sent to all members of the Board. One letter in reply was received from Viscountess Snowden, who is, we believe, a paid member of the staff. She wrote as follows:—

There is no exclusion from the B.B.C. list of lecturers and speakers of those who hold unorthodox views on religious questions, as the most cursory study of our programmes will reveal. The names of Earl Russell, Mr. Harold Nicholson, and Mr. H. G. Wells, which frequently appear in our programmes will reveal the catholicity of the B.B.C. in this matter.

Men and women who are entitled to speak with authority on their subjects and without unnecessarily wounding the susceptibilities of their listeners are welcomed on the microphone.

But if your society desires to have opportunities of attacking on Sundays the sincerely held religious beliefs of millions of listeners, whether a majority or not is beside the point, that is a policy I find myself unable to agree with on grounds of good feeling and good taste alone.

The remedy for those who do not believe in the religious views of our preachers and who do not care to listen to them is to switch on to another programme or to abstain from listening altogether.

The hours added to the beginning of a Sunday programme will more than compensate for the loss of forty minutes consecrated to devotional exercises.

To a student of psychology that is an interesting case letter. It is a letter which reveals far more than it says, and far more than the writer knows. For it is evident that the letter while ostensibly written to Mr. Burgess, is really written to the Viscountess Snowden, who has not followed the example of Mrs. Bertrand Russell in declining to accept a title in which she once professed disbelief. A religious bigot should never attempt to reason, that in itself shows some weakening. He, or she, should merely state the rule and have done with it. To argue that one's bigotry is just, weakens it considerably. As it is Mrs., I beg her pardon, Viscountess Snowden's letter is querulous, irrelevant, even impertinent, and on a question of fact evasive if not untruthful. Viscountess Snowden is evidently uneasy about the position, but a society lady must stand for social conventions, although her earlier tendencies are still sufficiently active to demand some sort of soothing on being so manifestly flouted. Hence the letter of apology—to Viscountess Snowden.

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#### A Poor Apology.

To say there is no exclusion of unorthodox views on religion may be true if "orthodox" is read in a very conventional way. But until it can be shown that the B.B.C. has permitted, or will permit a direct attack on Christianity—an attack, that is, which will be in as plain language and as unmistakable as the defences of and pleas for religion, the statement is a mere evasion of the truth. Heretics, and even Atheists have spoken before the microphone, but there has been neither a straightforward statement of Atheism, nor a direct criticism on religion. Heresy and unorthodoxy may be found in scores of pulpits, it would be strange if some were not found in the generally stupid religious addresses with which the B.B.C. tries to induce somnolency on Sundays, and on weekdays. If Viscountess Snowden is really in earnest, will she advise a course of lectures on the mythology of Christianity, or on the non-existence of an historical Christ, or on the folly of belief in a future life, or on the moral and social consequences

of Christianity from an Atheistic standpoint? There need be no unnecessary wounding of religious feelings. The trouble is that any direct, uncompromising criticism of Christianity usually comes under the head of "unnecessarily wounding." Hence its exclusion.

Viscountess Snowden's remark that she is opposed to offering opportunities of attacking "sincerely held religious beliefs" is proof of the truth of what has been said. Your heresy must not be the kind that attacks "sincerely held religious beliefs." You may criticize so long as you do not condemn. But what has "sincerely held beliefs" to do with the question? What belief is there that is not sincerely held? Properly applied this standard would exclude discussion of all beliefs. And what would have happened to Mrs. Snowden had the Labour Party practiced the principle she now lays down for the guidance of the B.B.C.?

The last two clauses of Viscountess Snowden's letter is just impertinence. If you do not believe in the religious views of "our preachers" don't listen. Remember, we are dealing with what is to all intents and purposes a Government monopoly for which all who use it are taxed. That monopoly is utilized by a band of bigots for the broadcasting of religious services—to a population not ten per cent of which attend church at all, religious services are broadcast wherever and whenever possible, preachers are engaged to preach sermons or deliver lectures in defence of Christianity, and no proper reply is ever permitted. And on the one day in the week when British taxpayers are able to use their wireless sets all day, they are driven to the Continent to get what they require. Meanwhile the B.B.C. deliberately lies, time after time, concerning the volume of protest against their procedure, and Viscountess Snowden, ex-labourite, one who has mouthed about liberty, freedom and the equality of all before the law, calmly tells us that we must not be permitted to attack the sincerely held beliefs of religious people, and if we do not like what the B.B.C. gives us, and for which we pay, well, then we can go without it, but keep on paying.

Well, well, I suppose we must put up with the impertinence of Viscountess Snowden as we have put up with the impertinence of others. Where Christianity is concerned the only time that the average Christian will act justly is when he, or she, cannot do otherwise. Freethinkers have driven a great many Christians to apologise for their intolerance, and that is the first indication of improvement. We shall gradually improve upon that—very gradually. I admit, but the world moves slowly. Freethinkers must keep up the pressure. Freethought has taught an institution such as the Roman Church to be cautious and to grant much that it formerly denied. It is not likely to give way or to be disheartened at the bigotry of a John Reith, the airy impertinence of a Viscountess Snowden, or the thunders of a committee of B.B.C. parsons. Where religion is concerned there is only one occasion when one can depend upon Christians acting justly. And that is when they have no Christianity left.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The greater the difficulty, the more glory in surmounting it. Skillful pilots gain their reputation from storms and tempests.—*Epicurus*.

One of the vulgar in any ill that happens to him, blames others; a novice in philosophy blames himself, and a philosopher blames neither the one nor the other.—*Epictetus*.



## Body-snatching as a Fine Art.

"Open your mouth, and shut your eyes, and see what Zeus shall send you."—*Aristophanes*.

"Power has been hitherto occupied in no employment but in keeping down Wisdom. Perhaps the time may come when Wisdom shall exert her energy in repressing "The sallies of Power."—*Landor*.

A NEWSPAPER paragraph stated, not long since, that a special religious service had been held at Rochester Cathedral on the anniversary of the death of Charles Dickens. It was added that an address was given by Bishop Lanchester King on behalf of the local branch of the Dickens Fellowship, and a wreath was placed on the great writer's memorial in the south transept of the cathedral.

This is a recent illustration of the humility of Christians in claiming great men as belonging to their faith. Charles Dickens is not a solitary example. Hiccoughing Highlanders annually claim Robert Burns as a believer. Countless critics have described Shelley as a young man who was a life-long Christian without realizing the soft impeachment. Swinburne suffered the double indignity of being refused burial in Westminster Abbey because he was a Freethinker, and of actually being interred elsewhere "in the sure and certain hope" of a creed he despised. So far as distinguished persons are concerned, priests have made body-snatching one of the fine arts. They administered the sacrament to the dead bodies of Richard Burton and Jerome Napoleon. They mumbled their mythological nonsense over the bodies of doubting Thomas Huxley, and Charles Darwin. Matthew Arnold and Robert Buchanan also suffered the last insults of a Church they smiled at whilst living. One might prolong the list to the length of a column, but names enough have been cited to show how unscrupulous priests are in the war between freedom and superstition.

Charles Dickens was as militant a Radical as William Cobbett, and he was just as advanced in the matter of religion. Even the members of the local branch of the Dickens Fellowship might have realized this had they but read, or even dipped into, the pages of *The Pickwick Papers*. For, in this most light-hearted of all his works, Dickens lashes religious hypocrisy with all the zest of a Moliere. Nor was this a case of youthful exuberance, for, in the meridian of his fame, in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, he added to the gaiety of the nation by the pen-portrait of that pious humbug, Samuel Pecksniff. Nor was this a sudden impulse of genius, for, apart altogether from novel-writing, Dickens wrote an outspoken pamphlet, entitled *Sunday Under Three Heads*, in which he criticized freely the then Bishop of London for his uncivilized views regarding innocent recreation for working people on the one day in the week when they were free from their daily toil.

But "we must speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us," as Shakespeare says. In private life Dickens was an Unitarian, and, practically, the whole of the Christian World is Trinitarian. And Christian priests have for centuries regarded Unitarians as being outside the pale of Orthodoxy, and doomed most certainly to the red-hot poker department in the next world, just as if they were readers of the *Freethinker*. Indeed, a witty Anglican divine, at a time when brains were in the Church, described Unitarianism as "a feather-bed to catch a falling Christian." Even in the Unitarian fold Dickens was very broad-minded, and "wore his rue with a difference." Of mission work he was impressed unfavourably, as evidenced by his writing:—

So Exeter Hall holds us in mortal submission to missionaries, who (Livingstone always excepted) are perfect nuisances, and leave every place worse than they found it.

For years Dickens attended Little Portland Street Unitarian Church, where he had paid sittings, and subscribed to its funds. When that stalwart Freethinker, Robert Morrell, founded the National Sunday League, Dickens was heartily in favour of the movement for light and liberty. He not only helped the infant League with money, but gave it his personal support. He gave readings from his works for its benefit, with most gratifying results, for he was then at the zenith of his fame, and the public response was tremendous. Indeed, Dickens was a hard-shell heretic. All his life he had a very strong aversion from dogma and all forms of Priestcraft. Dickens abandoned all church attendance years before his death, but it is abundantly clear that his sympathies were always humanistic rather than religious.

An amusing instance of the great novelist's playfulness with regard to theological matters was his naming a dummy book in his library; "Evidences of Christianity by Henry the Eighth." Keen critics have always noticed the strong strain of Secularism in Dickens's writings; and Matthew Arnold, in his delightful book, *Friendship's Garland*, pictured himself taking his foreign friend, Arminius, to the House of Commons to hear the pious Sir William Harcourt "develop a system of unsectarian religion from the life of Mr. Pickwick."

John Forster, Dickens's friend and biographer, in his intense desire to whitewash the great writer's memory, sunk to the unsavoury level of Samuel Pecksniff, when he wrote:—

Upon essential points he (Dickens) had never any sympathy so strong as with the leading doctrines of the Church of England.

Forster never permitted his small courage to outrun his extreme discretion, as may be seen in his extraordinary reticence concerning Dickens's matrimonial troubles. Fortunately, readers have other and more truthful sources of information since Forster's biographical caricature of Dickens first cumbered the shelves of the circulating libraries. Despite all Forster's camouflage, Charles Dickens was a heretic, and there's an end of it. But members of the Dickens Fellowship ought really to read the works of the great novelist, and not confine themselves to the best-sellers of Edgar Wallace and Warwick Deeping.

This clerical trick of body-snatching is only a symptom of the priests' desire of universal domination. They cannot tolerate the bare idea that any man or woman can be great without their assistance. Although it should not be their business at all to interfere in purely secular affairs, priests are always poking their saintly noses into matters which are outside their province. They denounce the books people read, the plays folks witness, and the newspapers which have the audacity to report the frailties of parsons. The most popular of present-day amusements, the cinema, is to these worthies an Anti-Christian institution. From horse-racing to hiking, from golf to motoring, there is scarcely any form of entertainment which has not been the subject of their heated invective. Priests teach that this world is a vale of tears, and any attempt to brighten life arouses their opposition. It is high time to tell these pastors and masters that such despotic action on their part conflicts with democratic principles. They are a national nuisance and should be told quite plainly to mind their own sorry business.



## Criticism and the Bible.

### HEBREW LEGENDS OF THE AGE OF THE HEROES AND PATRIARCHS.

#### I.

AMONG many peoples, there is, in addition to the worship of the gods of the tribe and gens, a certain veneration rendered to those first human ancestors of the totem organizations, the so-called first-born, forefathers, sons of God, etc., who resulted from the sexual intercourse of the gods with the earth-born. It is true that most of those "god-begotten" firstlings never rise to the dignity and majesty of the gods proper. They are human, but yet not just the ordinary human being. According to many legends, they are regarded as of semi-divine origin—demi-gods. They have been endowed with all sorts of super-human powers which render them capable of mighty heroic deeds. In consequence of these super-human qualities, they not infrequently stand, in the estimation of their admiring posterity, nearer to the gods than to weaker and ordinary mortals. Sometimes after a victorious struggle with all kinds of strange giants, demons, dragons, etc., they are taken up into the world of the gods.<sup>1</sup> In other cases, they become more or less identified with the god who begat them, the god-son with the god-father, and are, so to speak, looked upon as a god become flesh, a god *in* his son, or god incarnate.<sup>2</sup>

There are many examples of such demi-god heroes in the legend-world of all peoples at a certain stage of evolution; in the legends of the old Greeks, as of the old Aryans of India, of the Germans, as of the old Slavs and the American aborigines. The old Hebrew mythology is no exception. In it, as bear witness the different allusions in the Old Testament to the god-begotten heroes of the days of yore, to the giants—"there were giants in those days"—to the sons of God and sons of Enoch, similar hero-legends play a role. That does not of course mean that these sayings were of purely Hebrew origin. Undoubtedly, they are a medley of different strains.

The narrative in the sixth chapter of Genesis, is an evident remnant of this legend-world:—

And it came to pass when men began to multiply on the face of the earth and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God (Hebrew: Beni-Elohim) saw the daughters of men that they were fair (the Hebrew expression means physically beautiful). And they took them wives of all which they chose. And the Lord (Yahwe) said, My spirit (my soul) shall not always strive with man, for that he is also flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. There were giants in the earth in those days: and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.

The statement is torn and incomplete. It is obviously only a short extract from a much lengthier report. It stands by itself in this chapter, and its content has no connexion with what follows in the same chapter. It is most probable that originally this legend supplied a particular account of how

<sup>1</sup> Genesis v. 24. "And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him."

<sup>2</sup> The Christian "God the Son" is, of course, a more modern version of the same story. New religions cannot be imposed upon the old without assimilating a great deal of the old. The identification of Jesus Christ with God was a concession to a deep-rooted and ancient belief. And since in reality God exists for man and not man for God, a God that had nothing human about him would not be a God and would cease to be recognized. Man concentrates his attention upon God because God is the concentrated ego of man.

the sons of Elohim (they are not some sort of angels but the flesh-begotten posterity of the god) entered into sexual relations with pretty, earthly women and of how, out of this intercourse, the heroes came forth and now performed all sorts of wonderful human deeds. To the later narrow-minded Yahwe worshipper, who took over this legend into his report, the original account appeared to be incompatible with his standpoint as a Yahwist. He compressed it into a few words and, in addition, inserted the third verse, a concoction of his own, to the effect that Yahwe, irritated over what was going on, limited the duration of human life to one hundred and twenty years. Later on, the modern text of this report was placed by the compilers of the Books of Moses at the top of the sixth chapter of Genesis, without regard for the fact that it stands not only in no connexion with the preceding and following statements, but directly contradicts the genealogical table given in the fifth chapter of Genesis, as well as the later accounts concerning the ages of the patriarchs.

Another passage which may also be quoted as bearing upon our present theme, is contained in the Book of Numbers xiii. 32, 33. There we read:—

And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature.

And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come out of the giants; and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.

But this conception of the old fathers of the tribes and gentes, as super-human heroes, is confirmed even more clearly than by the passages cited above, by the fact that these forefathers of the Old Testament bear, in great part, names which characterize them as of a god-like type. We find attached to those names the syllable, "el" (al), e.g., Methusael, Jubal, Tubal, Manalaleel, Amraphel, Ismael, Kemuel, Israel, etc.

What is signified by "El"? El (plural elohim), with the peoples of North Canaan and the Phœnicians, mostly "al" (feminine "alat," plural "alonim" and "alanim") with the Babylonian Semites "ilu" (abbreviated "il") is originally nothing but a general designation for the deified ancestor-spirits. We still find the word used in this sense, for example, in the old legend of the witch of Endor. When Saul begged her to call up the spirit of the dead Samuel and he asked her: "What sawest thou?" she answered: "I saw gods (Elohim) ascending out of the earth." Saul asked further: "What form is he of?" The witch answered: "An old man cometh up: and he is covered with a mantle." Thereupon, Saul, recognizing in the old man the spirit of Samuel, "stooped with his face to the ground and bowed himself."<sup>3</sup>

Another important fact, namely, that the Elohim originally identified with the spirits of the dead (Hebrew, "Ob"), is indicated in a passage out of the older part of the book ascribed to Isaiah, a book, however, which consists of the works of different authors and brought together after the return from Babylon. Chapters forty to sixty-six, the so-called Deutero-Isaiah, originated during the exile in Babylon. This

<sup>3</sup> Actually the name Israel is nothing but the mythical name of a tribal god, after which the Israelites later called themselves, just as the Gadites after the tribal god, Gad, the Ismaelites after their tribal god, Ismael, etc. Like all those tribes who considered themselves the posterity of mythical godly ancestors and in this sense Beni-Gad, Beni-Ismael, Beni-Reuben, etc., so also the Israelites called themselves Beni-Israel, or as it appears usually, in the Bible, the "children of Israel."

\* 1 Samuel xxviii. 11-14.



passage runs:—

And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should (that is to say, "why should") not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?\*

The word "el," in the case of the Phœnicians, "al," becomes later on, as is evidenced very clearly among the Phœnicians, a name for the ancestor spirit or ancestor-god of the individual tribe; and as a characterization of the higher god-rank of the tribal deities, the plural form "Elohim" comes frequently to be used for the individual god in the Hebrew of the Old Testament. With the tribes of Northern Canaan and Phœnicia, the characterization, "Ba," meaning great, lofty, becomes prefixed to the word "al," to distinguish the tribal godhead from the ordinary ancestor-gods. In this way arise the designations "baal, bael, beel" (for the female deities "baalat"), names which we often find mentioned in the Old Testament. In most cases, the words Baal and Baalat, among the Phœnicians, came to be associated with the tribal names or, still more often, with the names of the tribal cult-places. We hear of Baal of Tyre, of Sodon, of Tarshish, a Baalat of Byblos, etc.

The formation of such a nomenclature naturally takes place only gradually. We find therefore in the Old Testament writings, that the word Elohim is sometimes used for the tribal deities, at another time for the individual tribal god, or for several gods taken as a whole. In many passages such as, for example, Genesis xiv. 19 and 22; xvii. 1; xxi. 33; the word "el" is still used in the singular. On the other hand, in Genesis i. 26, the word Elohim is used in the sense of a number of gods: "And God said, Let us make man in our own image." The address, "Let us," presupposes at once, that, in addition to the speaking "El," there were still other gods (Elohim) present.

W. CRAIK.

(To be concluded.)

\* Isaiah viii. 19.

## The Fiction of Infallibility.

It is often forgotten that one of the main aims of Freethinkers is so to educate children as to draw out and allow of self-expression for the special faculties of the individual. It is true human value that counts in the emancipating and elevating of the race: not artificial dignities and titles, upon which Thomas Paine poured his scorn. The existing economic system allows of only a limited section having adequate opportunities for self-development and self-expression. Thus we have a fearful majority ruled and dictated to by a greedy minority. The most of the members of the majority are victims of an inferiority complex; and well does the minority know that and play upon it.

The pressure of social, ecclesiastical and commercial influences is very great—even upon those who set out as ardent champions of the common people and eloquent expositors of their wrongs. Thus we have the amazing spectacle of men who thirty years since were enthusiastic in their advocacy of liberty, who, studiously flattered by the great now out-Herod Herod in their reactionism and succumb to the comforts, luxuries and prompts of a form of existence into which they have gradually been inveigled by wealthy men. This applies unhappily not to politicians alone, but to several authors and scientists of a woolly-minded and mystical type, some of whom

in their eagerness to placate, and popularize themselves with, the ruling classes, are willing to argue that religion is a beneficent power in life, and try to prove that a curse is a blessing.

These people are very well content to let the mob instinct have full sway. Instead of indulging in their mystical and profitless speculations, it would fit them far better to help in the task of furnishing means for the better education of each individual child. It is deplorable to hear a man like Prof. J. Arthur Thomson linking religion with science as a "great human achievement." In point of fact, as the pages of history disclose, where religion did most prevail there was achievement at its lowest ebb. Achievement has all along been due to the efforts of rebels against tyrannical systems with supernatural sanctions.

We want to realize Schopenhauer's vision of each human mind as an imperial dictator in the realm of thought. In other words we want, and the world greatly needs, that each person should be not only permitted, but taught, encouraged and equipped to think for himself and herself untrammelled by any outside prejudgments and preconceptions.

In our present condition, it is necessary that men should be led and ruled. Individually, we may find this idea resisted; but the mass of the people are content to unquestioningly submit to the dictation of their "betters"; and we realize what a long way we have to go when we consider how the engineered economic crisis of August 1931 drove the panic-stricken electors into the arms of this heterogeneous National Government, the promised beneficence of whose work we are still waiting to see!

The doctrine of infallibility (and its practice) has arisen from the fact that practically up till now—or until quite recently—the common people as the victims of an inferiority complex have simply been like dumb driven sheep. This being the fact, the fiction of infallibility is at once seen to be logical. The Head of the Roman Catholic Church everybody knows is merely a fallible man; but in his capacity as Pope his edicts are accepted by "the faithful" as infallible and not to be questioned or disobeyed. Of course he must not and cannot do that which would deny the infallibility of his deliverances. For example, he would no longer be Pope if he were to declare the Virgin Mary to be an adulteress or a common prostitute. And let us see how far this doctrine of infallibility is observed even in spheres which are not, strictly speaking, ecclesiastical. It is an ancient maxim that the King can do no wrong as the exerciser of "Divine Right." Nor in any matter of order in the conduct of the affairs of the House of Commons can the Speaker do wrong. An M.P. may believe, even know, the Speaker's ruling to be wrong; but he must accept it, obey it, and abide by it. The same applies to the Lord Chancellor as Chairman of the House of Lords; to a Mayor or Provost acting as Chairman of a Town Council Meeting; even to a referee at a football match. It is specially applicable in the case of law suits carried to the Supreme Court of Appeal. The final judgment must be accepted and acquiesced in by all the litigants. In arbitration, it is instanced by two parties in dispute, each of whom appoints an arbiter and both jointly appoint an oversman. The final decision of the oversman if he be appealed to, must be accepted by both. In all these respects we find the fiction of infallibility at work. The original source of that fiction is very ancient. For ages lawyers were the satellites of the Church. And yet we gather from the New Testament that the first Christians were prohibited from taking oaths or going to law with one another. In recent times they have not only frequently sued one



another in the Law Courts; but have shelled and mutilated one another on the battlefield! But the last thing to look for in religious teaching is consistency. And the last thing to look for in a Christian when his blood is up is love.

So that if there is any hope of giving the children of our day a better education than their predecessors had, we must get the Bible out of the secular schools, and by an exclusively scientific education imbue the little ones with a respect for consistency, honour and truth and a deep human affection, making them in a very real sense lovers of their kind instead of greedy grasping after wealth, position, titles and gew-gaws and oppressive power over their fellow beings. One recalls fresh, innocent, happy playmates in childhood, whom he has met twenty years later and found them seared, hardened, lined, self-centred and brass-necked-blighted by this dehumanizing and corrupting competition and race after gain!

IGNOTUS.

## Medieval Faith and Fable.\*

### II.—SCEPTICS OF THE MIDDLE AGES.

In the earlier period of the Middle Ages sceptics were rare. Dr. MacCulloch gives the ninth century as the first to produce "an appeal to reason," and a "demand for free speculation," when John Scotus Erigena (880) taught that "authority not acknowledged by reason is without value." He also taught—universal salvation! Most of the Canon's sceptics were believers of a sort. He cheerfully grants that "while Freethought may seem incompatible with the term Age of Faith . . . much of that faith might be called unreasoning credulity regarding many superstitions, associated now, more or less, with the fundamental truths of Christianity." Yet the *Church Times* naively complains that this book contains much of faith and fable, but little about *the Faith*. At least half of it is, as the jacket truthfully informs us, concerned "with purely Christian beliefs, superstitions and practices." Sceptics must be distinguished from heretics, the latter implying schismatic or erroneous belief, and the former more fundamental doubt or positive unbelief regarding fundamentals of revealed religion.

After John Scotus came Abélard (1079-1142) who, calling himself a "devout" Christian, yet affirmed that "doubt was the best means of arriving at faith." The famous St. Thomas Aquinas, the founder of scholastic philosophy, in his endeavour to prove that man could come to believe in God by the use of natural reason, stated the sceptical objections to that belief in great detail and with such thoroughness that the mystical theologians regarded him with suspicion and the Church itself (which in 1231 by an interdict of Pope Gregory prohibited the reading or study of the works of Aristotle) was not as enthusiastic about his adventures into metaphysics as are the expositors of scholasticism to-day. It is significant that "those centuries which witnessed great personal devotion, the rise of the mendicant orders, the flourishing of scholasticism, the building of noble churches, the writing of the finest devotional prose and poetry," also saw "the rise of new forms of religious art and of much scepticism, Freethought, and indifference to religion." Even in the thirteenth century, "there is a constant complaint in the sermons and practical religious writings of the absolute indifference of multitudes to any form of Christian worship. Indifference is nigh to unbelief. The peasantry, the serfs, seem to have been largely cold to the Church and its beliefs. They hated the clergy, who certainly seldom spoke kindly of them. The Canons of the thirteenth century Councils also show that even general excommunications were disregarded and often mocked at." These are

features of the life of the Middle Ages, of which we hear little from the historians who seek to whitewash its most characteristic features.

The trade in relics, which still flourishes, started comparatively early in the Church's history. Relics of the "true cross were believed to have the power of multiplying themselves. The nails from the cross also multiplied. The crown of thorns, spear, sponge and reed, the seamless coat, the pillar to which Jesus was supposed to be bound, the stone from the sepulchre, earth from it or from the Holy Land, "even our Lord's footprints" were known in the fourth century. The boards from the Bethlehem manger were on show in Rome in the seventh century, and the Holy Coat at Trèves, had a rival at Argenteuil, and was exhibited in more than a dozen other places.

Relics of the Virgin appeared in the sixth century, including the bucket and pitcher at the Annunciation, her stool, her girdle, her clothing, head-band. Charlemagne cherished a lock of her hair, and her milk became a favourite relic in the West. "It was that which had nourished our Lord, or it fell from her breast when she appeared from Heaven to heal with it St. Fulbert or St. Dominic or St. Bernard, or it came from the breasts of her statues or pictures. There was a legend that when in fear of Herod she fled to a grotto, and feared that her terror would make her milk hurtful to the Child, she spilt it on the rocks, which became white. Scrapings of the rock, mixed with water, had virtue for nursing mothers." With a pawky dryness the Canon observes, "As the desire for such fabulous relics increased ever new ones came to light"—the law of supply and demand!

Such legends and fables can be traced in connexion with most of the vital beliefs of historic Christianity. Every kind of good and evil consequence was associated with the possession of or the irreverent treatment of the Host. The wafer had magic powers. Several persons saw, at the consecration in the Mass a live baby. Geraldus Cambrensis says the host was frequently changed into a Lamb or pieces of flesh and blood. The wine in the chalice became real blood, and a "host," broken on the floor, shed blood. The widespread belief in miracles of every sort and kind provides a chapter of wonders which says the writer, *mutatis mutandis* are the same as those told of Mohammedan, Buddhist, and Hindu saints, pagan priests, shamans, and savage medicine-men."

Medieval men, says Canon MacCulloch, "did not look for or try to make a better world here. The world was ending, the Last Judgment was imminent, there was no place for social optimism. With this went the idea that all existing institutions were good in themselves: they had been ordained by God, only men's sins had corrupted them. With such a view, joined to the belief in the immanence of the end, there was no scope for any endeavour to improve social and political institutions." After this, with what seems to be a very desperate effort to make the best of the two worlds of fable and fact, the learned writer concludes: "In succeeding centuries men have still sought the new age, and have not found it, or they have proclaimed its coming and it has not come. But wherever such dreams have been entertained they have ennobled certain groups of men, who, living from the point of view of those dreams, have left the world a little better than they found it."

The history of religion, to which this volume makes a useful contribution, must lead impartial and critical students to a conclusion which would, no doubt, shock its author. Faith prevails, and indeed originated, where knowledge is overwhelmed and overawed by fear. When forces and phenomena new to the experience or outside the boundaries of humanity are faced, not in dread and terror, but by reason and curiosity, scepticism begins. When man made God in his own image he was afraid not only of God, but of himself.

ALAN HANDSACRE.

\* By Canon J. A. MacCulloch. Harrap, 15s. net.

Let us all seek truth as if none of us had possession of it.—Volney.

True eloquence scorns eloquence.—Pascal.



## Acid Drops.

A new light is thrown on the world crisis which, according to a gentleman called Baron Procelli, really began with the "alteration of the King's Oath against Papal idolatry in 1910." Since then "the British climate has altered for the worse." Since then "we have not had a single peaceful prosperous or contented year." All this, according to the Baron, is a fulfilment of what is written in (Luke xxi. 25) namely, "upon the earth distress of all nations, with perplexity." And, in a communication to what we suppose is a responsible journal, the *Churchman's Magazine*, the Baron thus concludes his prognostications and lamentations. He says, "A 'strong delusion' from God has fallen upon our rulers and national leaders," and, as for the poor Baron: "Woe is me! For these things I weep; mine eye runneth down with water! The Lord is righteous; for we have rebelled against His commandments. For this I am in distress. Mine heart is turned within me; abroad disaster bereaveth, at home famine and death. And though I plead with the Press, yet my prayers are unheeded. See, O Lord, and consider." We hold no brief for the Press, but what they (or the Baron) can do, if God has sent the delusion from which all our troubles arise, is difficult to see.

As there are no prayers in the Church Liturgy for airmen and the crews of submarines (or for the matter of that, dirt-track racers) it might have been thought that accidents to such persons were among the few things with which the Almighty is not troubled by way of petition. But, as if it made the slightest difference, the Vicar of Berden (Essex) writes to the *Church of England Newspaper* to say that he has amended the prayer for "all who travel by land or by water" into "all who travel by land *over* water," and he thinks that travellers in underground railways should not be forgotten. Does he imagine that an accident can be averted by the substitution of "over" for "or"? Yes, he thinks he has done a wonderful thing for, he says, "the High Court of Parliament will not allow us to pray specifically for those who travel by air," so he turns "or" into "over," put his fingers to his nose, and treats "the High Court of Parliament" to a form of salute said to be associated with the remark "So much for Buckingham!"

The Vicar of Berden might occupy his spare time in compiling a Schedule of "neglected occupations," so far as the official prayers are concerned. He will find it a long job, and a good many people will have claims for inclusion of which he has never heard. Only the other day his fellow-clergyman the Vicar of Kirkby Malzeard (Yorks), "while helping to ring the bells at the Parish Church on Sunday evening," was ringing No. 3 bell "when the stay broke and he was carried up to the ceiling. His head struck the ceiling, and then he fell to the floor of the belfry." Did the bell-ringers start praying? No. "A doctor was sent for," who found the parson suffering from concussion and severe bruising, and "he will not be fit for duty for some weeks." Now we are sure that the Vicar of Berden, when puzzling his brain about how he could wangle a petition for airmen and tube travellers, never thought of accidents which occur in the actual service of the God who he thinks can avert them. This makes short work of prayer as an insurance against accidents. We may point out that there is, in the *Litany* a prayer for "succour, help and comfort" for "all who are in danger, necessity or tribulation," which, if he had only noticed it might have saved the Essex Vicar all his trouble.

The way of Christian apologists are, like the peace of God, past understanding. A pious gentleman, Mr. F. A. Hannam of Norwich, writes to the papers to say, "we shall never get a true understanding" of the difference between men and animals (*i.e.*, their "souls") unless we

recognize that "the Hebrew expression *nephesh hay-yah*" is used *once* (Gen. ii. 7) "of man," and everywhere else (Gen. i. and ix., etc) "of animals." Could there be a better example of apologetical tactics, or a more complete sacrifice of language, probability, and critical candour than to pretend that a word which everywhere else means animal life must mean something else in the one place where it is necessary for theological purposes that it shall? Not content with this, Mr. Hannam goes on to quote from Ezekiel xxxiii. to show that "the dry bones were covered with sinews, flesh and skin," but "there was not breath in them" until the Lord commanded the wind to blow them to life. But the Lord, who could make asses talk, also on this hypothesis, breathes into *all* living creatures "the breath of life," and Mr. Hannam's illustration of his argument is as wide of the mark as the argument itself.

Reference was made recently in "Views and Opinions" to the double-faced action of Sir Thomas Inskip, Attorney-General and President of the Lord's Day Observance Society, in regard to the successive Sunday Performances measures. There is nothing like being all things to all men if you are a politician, and, speaking at the Church Assembly, this gentleman admitted the real objects of those who, subject to Party Whips, he represents. He said: "It was not the Act of Parliament, but public opinion that was at fault. The stagnation and placidity with which we have allowed cinema and every sort of invasion of Sunday to advance by leaps and bounds is to be regretted. *The danger seems to be at present that too much liberty is allowed to the individual.*" This from an ornament of neo-Protestantism, and shows how much the vaunted "right of private judgment" really means to these bigots. Sir Thomas went on to declare that "no one knows better than I do that the Lord's Day Observance Act is obsolete. It depends on the common informer. It is no use in the twentieth century. It is a broken reed." In other words the Government's decision to make *new* legislation against Sunday recreation is, as we have said from the beginning, definitely worse than the more or less moribund existence of the old laws. The Lord's Day Observance Society says (in another appeal for funds to carry on), that the "Sunday Cinema Bill has delivered a smashing blow at the Christian Sunday." Our own belief is that, so far as legislation can do it, it has given that effete institution a new lease of life.

It is good news to learn that at last "practical Christianity" is coming into its own. Forty-six Churches of the City of London are uniting for a week of prayer, and the result ought to be a complete revival of "genuine" Christianity, this time after 2,000 years, the real thing. "No sordid prayers for solid bank balances" is the motto of an incumbent of one of the Churches, and "no profiteering at the expense of others." The implication is, of course, that this was the kind of thing prayed for during the past twenty centuries, but "genuine Christianity" must have no truck with such disgusting ideals.

The incumbent also quoted Scripture, "Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles, thou art in the way with him"—another beautiful ideal which no Christian would ever dream of following. Even in such a holy week as this, does our religious friend want us to believe he would agree at once with the Roman Catholic who told him that he and his Church were both beyond the pale? That the only true Church, recognized by Jesus, Mary, the Apostles and God, was the Roman Church? Does he want us to believe that the Roman Church would agree at once with the Protestant Alliance or the Calvinist would press to his heart his dear brother-in-Christ the Papist? Finally, would our incumbent agree with us that Jesus and the blessed Apostles, including both Mary and the Holy Spirit, are all pure myths? We don't think.



Last Sunday, the Bishop of Birmingham in a sermon at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields agreed—a long way after Tennyson—that “humane Agnosticism was better than hypocritical Christianity.” The religious *Daily Express* doesn't like this boosting up of its chief enemy at the expense of Christianity—even if the latter can be “hypocritical.” It thinks some parson ought to show there is more virtue in “honest faith” than in “honest doubt.” But surely that is always done already? Every Sunday no fewer than 8,806,357 sermons are preached all over the world pointing out the virtue of “honest faith.” Fancy writing a leader in protest when Dr. Barnes sticks up for once in favour of “honest doubt”! Perhaps the leader writer, in his heart of hearts really thinks Tennyson and Bishop Barnes were both right and hadn't the pluck to say so—or perhaps he wasn't allowed.

The following is a portion of a letter in a Methodist paper:—

It is acknowledged that the mind of the child receives lasting impressions from a very early age, and two of the great Churches of Christendom, the Church of England and the Roman Catholic, have recognized this and have acted accordingly . . . Why should not Methodist children from the ages of seven to fifteen receive from its ministers the religious instruction that will keep them faithful to Methodism in the course of years . . . ?

Quite so. If Christian doctrines and sectarian notions are not forced into the child's mind before he begins to reflect for himself, there is little hope of getting such irrational ideas accepted in adulthood. That is what the above letter is really confessing. What a confession!

A reference by Mr. Lloyd George to the late W. T. Stead's *If Christ Came to Chicago*, and a caustic comment on the conditions Christ would find if he came to this world to-day had much notice in the press. Among other things the rt. hon. gentleman said, “Christ would see the followers of Confucius and Buddha helpless. Why? Because they followed the lessons of their teachers, who did not teach war, and they were at the mercy of the followers of Jesus of Nazareth who went there with 6-in. guns, rifles and explosives.” This must have been strong meat for the congregation at the Welsh Baptist Chapel where it was spoken. What would happen in the impossible, and from a Christian point of view awkward, return of Christ to London was ruthlessly depicted some years ago in a brilliant little satire of that title by the late Rev. R. C. Fillingham. What did happen in this event, as therein depicted, was that a special meeting of the Bishops was called and decided to appoint a small deputation to see this “person,” and, following the example of the Gergesenes in the Gospel, “they besought him that he would depart out of their coasts!” “The Christian nations of the world,” said Mr. Lloyd George, are “engaged with all their might in perfecting weapons more destructive, more terrible than ever invented or utilized before.” And after twenty centuries of Christianity has produced this result, he adds “Salvation is still in Jesus of Nazareth!” Can you beat it?

A reader of the *Daily Herald* mentions that the fifty prominent English Churchmen who have issued an appeal to American Churchmen to use their influence for the cancellation of war debts, ask others to forgive their debtors, while they themselves take tithes from farmers who are not, and never have been their debtors. For our part, we are not sanguine that this reminder will have any effect in inducing the English Church to cancel all tithes for ever. Christ, as everyone should know, never intended his “forgive your debtors” doctrine to be applied by the English Church to the Church's debtors. The doctrine was simply intended to provide

a useful sermon topic for Anglican parsons to improve, instruct, and uplift the people—that's all. Incidentally, we may add that the Church was originally designed on the pattern of a bird of prey—it never lets go of its captures.

Apropos of the Roman Catholic Congress at Dublin, the *Church Times* says that “tribute must be paid to the admirable management and the encouragement given to press photographers and descriptive writers. The English Press, materialistic as it commonly is, gives columns to Rome when it gives paragraphs to Canterbury.” This is said because the Press classified the Roman show in the same news category as the Derby, Ascot, a cup-tie, or a murder! Of course, the Roman circus secured plenty of notice because the Roman stage-managers thoroughly understand the Press and the art of getting free advertisement.

Writing about the “gambling evil,” the editor of the *Church Times* asks:—

Why do the men and women who live in mean streets waste their money with the bookmaker? The answer is because they are forced to live dull, grim lives in mean streets. And the moral theologian who sees sin in a bookmaker's slip must also denounce many Stock Exchange transactions and a large part of what is regarded as legitimate business, which is, in effect, sheer gambling . . . We would fight the bookmaker with better houses, better education, greater opportunity for rational amusement, and, above all, with the Catholic religion that brings with it the knowledge of the dignity and the possible beauty of a man's life.

The *Church Times* is right up-to-date. It has absorbed the old Freethinking remedy for what the pious have called “sin.” But we fail to see how the “Catholic religion” is likely to play any part in eradicating the gambling craze. Countries where the Catholic religion is most prevalent are countries where the gambling craze is most in evidence.

## Fifty Years Ago.

THE trade of the priest is as widespread as that of the butcher or baker, and perhaps more so, for in many parts of the world where civilization has not brought division of labour, and every family kills and cooks for itself, there is still found a gentleman who takes charge of the theological department, and supplies the laymen with all they require in that line. From the African rain-doctor to the Pope of Rome or the Archbishop of Canterbury is a far cry, and yet they are both of the same profession. Their business is to look after men's souls, to propitiate the gods, and to discern with spiritual vision what lies on the other side of knowledge and common-sense.

A considerable correspondence has been raised in the *Western Daily Press*, by a letter from Dr. Dondney, Vicar of St. Luke's, Totterdown, complaining of having witnessed haymaking on a Sunday. The worthy antediluvian connects the crime of preventing hay from being spoilt by working on the first day of the week with the murders in Ireland, the massacre of Europeans at Alexandria, and the influx of Jesuits from the Continent. The case, he feels, is so desperate that nothing will put the irascible Almighty into a good humour again till we have set apart “a day for humiliation and prayer that a peace might be restored to our borders, the chastening hand of the Almighty removed, so plainly indicated by the strange and unaccountable maladies which have of late years befallen our cattle, our sheep, our pigs, and our poultry.”

The “Freethinker,” July 9, 1882.



## THE BIRKENHEAD CASE.

THE action brought by myself on behalf of the members of the National Secular Society against the Secretary of the Beechcroft Settlement and the Clerk to the Birkenhead Justices was heard at the Birkenhead County Court on June 28. It resulted in a judgment for the defence. I may not say much at present, so confine myself to the simple statement that the judge—Whitmore Richards—declined to listen to any oral evidence, despite the repeated urging of Counsel and gave judgment for the defence on the higher scale. We have the written opinion of Counsel that the judgment may be reversed in a superior court. I have summoned a special meeting of the Executive to consider the question of an appeal. I will say no more at present. The issue is an important one, and touches many other interests besides the direct one as affecting the N.S.S. There I must let the matter rest for the moment. But the N.S.S. never starts a fight without due consideration and then usually carries it through. I will only add that the case excited considerable attention, both in the press and among the public. But the fight is not yet over and we are determined to do what we can to secure a reversal of the judgment.

CHAPMAN COHEN,  
President, National Secular Society.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- W. SMITH.—Patience. It takes all sorts to make a world, and we must not try to mould all on the same pattern.
- "WESTERN."—It is not quite clear what the Judge meant by telling the jury that the evidence was not given on oath. It might mean that there was no "sworn" evidence in the sense that either an oath or an affirmation was taken. If it meant that the evidence was to be discounted because an affirmation was taken, then the judge was distinctly out of order in making such a remark. There is no legal distinction between an oath and an affirmation. In fact, any formula which is binding to the witness is legal and must be taken.
- G. WILLIAMS.—Many of our readers take an extra copy of the *Freethinker* to give to a friend who might be interested in the paper. This very often leads to new subscribers, and is a useful and inexpensive method of helping. Thanks for your adopting the plan.
- J. MACKINNON.—Next week.
- J. W. WILLIAMS (Jaggan).—Many thanks for cuttings; also for good wishes.
- B. PEGG.—The pamphlets strike us as having plenty of good feeling but little reliable intelligence.
- B. LECHMERE.—There must be enough pieces of the crown of thorns in existence to provide a coronet for St. Peter's Cathedral. We believe there was an explanation offered of the quality as due to the miraculous power of the crown to duplicate itself. It is certain that if the Church made this an article of faith all Roman Catholics would believe it.
- D. DAWSON.—We think we had better let the correspondence stop where it is. It looks like going round in a circle.
- E. A. McDONALD.—Thanks for report of the address of General Smuts. It will be useful for future reference, but, as you say, we have already discussed the substance of what he has to say in *God and the Universe*.
- M. HUGHES.—We are not surprised at your disgust at the exhibition of gross superstition at the late Eucharistic Congress. The whole thing is a sad reflection on the state of our civilization. Thanks for distributing copies of the *Freethinker*.
- R. BUNTING.—Those issues of the *Freethinker* are out of print. But Mr. Cohen's arguments on that head may be found in his *Theism or Atheism*, price 3s. 6d.
- J. LEWIN (Cape Town).—We are obliged for note of the

blasphemy trial. It will be useful for future reference.

J. M. STUART-YOUNG.—Received with thanks.

R. H. BAIRD.—Pleased to hear of the determined and successful stand made by Mr. Whitehead against the bigots of Ashington. Coolness and determination are valuable assets in such circumstances.

CINE CERE.—Regret your letter would inevitably open the way to a purely political correspondence, which is outside the scope of this paper. Personally, we appreciate your point of view.

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*Friends who send us newspapers would enhance the favour by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.*

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*Lecture notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, by the first post on Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.*

## Sugar Plums.

The Government has got its Sunday Entertainment Bill through its third reading, its independent minded followers having voted according to orders, whether they believed in the way they voted or not. Of these followers the most wonderful is surely the Attorney-General, Sir Thomas Inskip. On the introduction of the Bill as a private member's measure he denounced it as striking at the roots of England's greatness and destroying the one glimpse of heaven we had. When the Bill was re-introduced as a Government measure he obediently backed the Bill. Then a few days later, at a Church gathering he opposed Sunday entertainments altogether. And all the time he is the President of the Lord's Day Observance Society, which wants to shut everything on Sunday—except the jaws of parsons—and prophecies the downfall of the country as a consequence of the passing of the Bill. Honesty and politics appear to be getting farther and farther apart.

But the Bill is surely one of the most cowardly and the most contemptible that any government has put forward for at least two generations. The *New Statesman* speaks of it as "a hotch-potch of compromise, which puts childish restrictions on innocent amusements without satisfying the unco guid to whom no amusement on Sunday can be innocent, provides a new occupation for municipal kill-joys and spreads the cloak of hypocrisy." But that is a very mild description of this measure. Its real evil goes farther than hypocrisy and childish restriction, with both of which we are accustomed where religion is concerned.

We have already pointed out that the term compromise, applied to the Bill is misnomer. It does not compromise at all, and in the course of the third reading debate it was admitted that one aim of the Bill was to



restrict the growth of Sunday entertainments so far as was possible. Those who spoke of the Bill as a compromise, could either never have read it or never have understood it. The Bill permitted entertainments where it was practically impossible to prevent them, and took advantage of its surrender to make it very difficult for Sunday entertainments to spread.

This was not all. Largely as a consequence of our own criticisms Sunday meetings which were intended to be licenced, were taken out of the second Bill, and with them concerts. But with characteristic hypocrisy and well-grounded confidence in the stupidity of the public, it gave the licencing authorities the power to say what kind of concerts should be held—which is a licence in another form. And whereas under the old Sunday Act anything that was legal from Monday till Saturday was legal on Sunday, without further licencing, provided there was no charge, must now be licenced whether there is a charge for admission or not. The Bill thus permits what cannot be prevented, and takes advantage of the situation by taking away a freedom on Sunday that has never been questioned. And it introduces into English law the iniquitous principle of a confiscation of profits made on Sunday in the course of an occupation that is legal and even necessary. The only wise thing to do with a Bill of this kind, when it becomes law, is to ignore it. The old Sunday Act was partly repealed by this method, and the new one would share the same fate if it were treated in the same way.

Apropos of our unacknowledged followers in the press. Readers of *The Rule of the Sabbatarian* will remember our likening of the Government confiscating part of the cinema profits on Sunday, to the gangster methods of Messrs. Al Capone and company. Under the head of "The Sunday Racket," the *Manchester Evening News* writes as follows:—

Before anyone objects to this heading let him consider the meaning of the word "racket" when used in this sense. It means the levying of money under duress in return for the allowance of this or that liberty. And that is exactly the position . . . regularized by the House of Commons.

In stooping to the methods of the Chicago gangster the British Parliament has surely touched the lowest levels. We are glad to see others recognizing this, but it would have been better had the Bill been attacked earlier in the right manner.

The Ashington and District Branch of the N.S.S. has been in existence for a few months only, but is putting in some good work, as may be gathered from Mr. Whitehead's report of excellent meetings during the whole week. The local Branch may be relied upon to follow up the advantage, and unattached Freethinkers in the district are asked to come in and help. Full particulars of membership can be obtained from Mr. J. H. English, 7 Railway Row, North Seaton Colliery, Nr. Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, Northumberland.

The new edition of *The City of Dreadful Night* is having "a good press." Genius must die to be recognized, especially poetical genius. Mr. Humbert Wolfe, in his review in a contemporary, makes an apt point about Thomson's fearlessness:—

He accepts defeat, but he conquers it by ruling in hell, since he is outcast from heaven. There is no whimper, no sneer, no ambiguous loyalty to the light. He looks Fate between its unbright eyes, and never lets his own fall.

This is well put, and brings of the truth about Thomson's own advertised "despondency."

The Secular Society Limited has just issued a second edition of the late G. W. Foote's fine pamphlet *The Mother of God*, with an introductory note by Chapman Cohen. The pamphlet is a fine piece of work, written in G. W. Foote's best style. There is that mixture of wit, learning, and directness of writing that rightly made his

name famous. The price of the pamphlet is twopence, by post twopence halfpenny. Just now when the question of the Roman Church is so much before the country this pamphlet should prove useful.

Apropos of what has just been said, the very cheap reprint of one of the best booklets of Colonel Ingersoll's *Rome or Reason* is also proving of much propagandist value. It is a splendid piece of reasoning and annihilates the case which is set up by and for the Roman Church. Incidentally it touches wider issues, but it simply crushes the case for the Church. It is published at the price of threepence, by post fourpence. We strongly advise the purchase of extra copies by our readers so that they may be placed where they will prove most useful.

Mr. G. Whitehead will be in Glasgow for a week commencing from to-day (Sunday). The local saints will no doubt take full advantage of it being the only week Mr. Whitehead will spend in Scotland during the summer, all dates being fully booked until the end of September. Full details for the week will be found in the Lecture Notices column.

Mr. J. Clayton is also pursuing his propagandist career in Lancashire, and has just broken new ground in Bacup. He writes of a good first meeting, with keen interest displayed on the part of listeners. There are scores of towns in which similar meetings, might be, and ought to be, held.

A soldier, court-martialled at Borden left camp to go to his mother who was seriously ill, and had no one to care for her. As soon as he could he walked ninety miles to give himself up. "The defending officer submitted that he stayed because of his mother's condition and entreaties." The press report adds, "sentence will be pronounced later." What a "crime!"

## Science Philosophy and Religion.

MR. JOAD'S latest book, *Philosophical Aspects of Modern Science* (Allen and Unwin, 10s. 6d.), consists of an examination of the views and opinions of Professor Eddington; Sir James Jeans; and Bertrand Russell, along with a discussion as to the bearing of the latest discoveries regarding the constitution of matter upon philosophy, and incidentally, upon religion.

Although scientists and philosophers have, for the most part—there are curious survivals like Prof. Fleming—given up the anthropomorphic ideas regarding man as the final cause and reason for which the universe was created which they learned in their childhood, from the Bible, yet the impressions remain, like the fossils in the earth, relics of an earlier period, continually cropping up, and creating an unconscious bias in favour of some operating and controlling mind governing the universe from the back of beyond. And all the while these anthropomorphic ideas are taught to the children this will remain the case.

Of course the Creator is no longer the manlike and all-too-human God of the Bible. He has been reduced to such a shadow that it would be difficult to understand why some scientists continue so strenuously to retain belief in such a phantom, if we did not realize the power that early teaching exercises in later life. As to where this Being, or Thing, or Mind is situated, what it is like, how it operates, what it does, they haven't the foggiest notion. They can only tell you what it is not.



Far from being the chief centre of interest in the universe, man is now seen to be one of its most insignificant productions. Life itself, animal and vegetable, is an extremely rare occurrence in the universe, it only appears as we know it, as a florescence on the surface of burnt-out and decayed planets. It has been described as a disease to which worn out planets became liable! Planets themselves are of extreme rarity in the universe. Mr. Joad, summarizing the researches of Sir James Jeans upon these bodies, observes:—

Thus the occurrence of a planetary system is an exceedingly rare accident, and the number of planets in the universe on which conditions even remotely approximate to those in which life, as we know it, alone is possible, is exceedingly small. We should have to visit thousands of millions of stars before finding a planetary system as recent as our own. Elsewhere Sir James Jeans estimates that the zones of the universe in which life, as we know it, is possible added together constitute less than a thousand million millionth part of space.

And further, the life of a planetary system, judged by the astronomical time scale, is very short, and for only a small part of that time is it fitted to support life. The whole past of life upon the earth, says Mr. Joad "is reckoned at roughly twelve hundred million years; of human life at about a million!" Mr. Joad goes on to draw the inevitable conclusion:—

The cumulative effect of facts of this kind is to suggest that the occurrence of life is an unplanned accident in a fundamentally lifeless universe. Amid the vast immensities of astronomical space and geological time life appears as a tiny glow flickering uncertainly and doomed to ultimate extinction. An incidental and unwanted passenger, it travels across an environment which is fundamentally alien and brutal. But only for a while; one day, when the heat of the sun is no longer such as to maintain conditions suitable to life, it will finish its pointless journey with as little significance as in the person of the amoeba it began it. (p. 55.)

It is clearly evident that whatever was the motive for creating the universe—granting, for the moment, that there was a Creator and a creation—life had nothing to do with it, and only an intensely egotistic and vain person, knowing these facts, would imagine that the universe was created for mankind; or that men were of any more significance in the economy of Nature than mice or flies.

In order to combat this view, so humiliating to the pride of man, Sir James Jeans draws attention to the fact that all the pictures which science now draws of nature, are mathematical pictures. That nature fits into a "mathematical mould" and he makes the deduction that the universe must have been constructed, or designed, by a mathematical mind. At this point, Sir James, with the perverse ingenuity which only the attempt to blend religion with science engenders, uses the very insignificance of mankind in the scheme of nature as an argument in favour of the existence of a super-human mathematical designer of the universe. His argument runs as follows.

Isn't it wonderful that man, the insignificant dweller upon an insignificant burnt-out planet, whose whole existence as a race is but momentary, as regarded by astronomical time, is yet able to understand its workings, and fathom its inner nature. The solution of this marvel is, according to Sir James, that the universe fits into the mathematical framework which he has constructed, with the inference, that the universe was designed by a mind working on similar lines to our own.

To this Mr. Joad replies that, to say "That nature is exhaustively analysable in terms of pure mathe-

matics seem to me demonstrably untrue. Living organisms, for example, are part of nature. But the concepts of biology, by means of which their character as living is investigated and their behaviour studied, are certainly not mathematical." (p. 65.) Both Sir James Jeans and Professor Eddington contend that now that the atom has been reduced to electrons, nothing remains but a set of mathematical equations, and pointer readings, and the boards of the universe have been cleared for religion. To which Mr. Joad replies: "Science may have cleared the boards of the universe for religion, but it has no contribution to offer to the writing of the play."

Moreover, considering the insignificance of man and his abode, and the short period he has been in existence, compared with the unimaginable age of the universe, is it not the height of presumption, asks Mr. Joad, to suppose that human minds so lately evolved, so imperfectly developed, not only

can comprehend the reality of the universe, but that this reality has a unique and special relation with, nay more, a unique and special interest in and concern for themselves; to affirm further that reality is itself mind or spirit modelled in their own image, and to conclude in virtue of this alleged kinship of reality with themselves that it is even now continuous with them, so that they may ultimately aspire to enter into it and, becoming one with it, assure themselves of perpetual being. . . . For, it may well be asked, what presumption could be greater than to hold that the universe is a process in time, seeking the perfection of the human spirit as its goal, and that the preparation for this perfection of a certain number of individual souls, conceived in the likeness of twentieth-century men, is the object for which the whole creation travails? (p. 321.)

Mr. Joad says that he "cannot resist the conclusion that the science of these writers [Jeans and Eddington] is immeasurably more impressive than the philosophy." And as for the motives by which they are governed: "Their object has been to present the reality at the back of things not only as worthy of man's admiration, but as friendly and even akin to his nature. In so doing they have remembered their wishes but have forgotten their science. When the scientist leaves his laboratory and speculates about the universe as a whole, the resultant conclusions are apt to tell us more about the scientist than about the universe." (p. 339.) Mr. H. G. Wells, in his recently published book *The Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind*, makes an amusing reference to Sir James' religious speculations. Mr. Wells says that it does not concern him whether:—

the cosmos rests on a tortoise which rests on an elephant whose legs reach "all the way down," or that it is all a thought in the mind of a Jeans-like Deity, whose symbol is the square root of minus one who started his vast meditation with the simple proposition, "Let there be light," and gradually worked things out—a game of Patience played by a Being of Infinite Leisure—to produce a recognizable reflection of Himself in the mind of a popular savant. (p. 723.)

It does seem to be rather a waste of time and material. For our part we do not expect to see a new religion arise to the God of Mathematics. They will not exile the old Gods to place this parvenue on the vacant throne.

W. MANN.

I say discuss all and express all—I am for every topic openly.—*Walt Whitman.*

Energy and persistence conquer all things.—*Franklin.*



## Immoral Libraries.

"Oh to be an author!" sighs the average member of the public enviously; "for what other life is so free?" The seldom-realized truth is that practically the only freedom left to authors in these days of universal "education" is the freedom to starve. The circulating libraries are in large measure responsible for this disgraceful state of affairs, but since we are rapidly developing into a nation of circulating library subscribers the moral responsibility must be shared by all of us.

Authorship is popularly supposed to be a delightful and remunerative hobby, or a part-time job which pays very much better than most full-time jobs to which lesser mortals must submit themselves. The eye of imagination sees the author lolling on the azure coasts of the Mediterranean, basking in the sun awaiting an inspiration; when the inspiration seizes him he will, in his turn, seize hold of a pen, jot down a few notes which an efficient typist will transcribe for him, and thereafter he will resume his luxurious idleness. In due course the publisher's fat cheque will reach him, out there on the Riviera, sufficing to pay for a few more months of carefree holiday-making.

The fact is that authorship is "nine-tenths perspiration to one-tenth of inspiration." Authorship is a sweated trade—one of the very worst. Authors have no trade union which can effectively protect their interests against the publishers who are their direct paymasters. Their indirect paymasters are, however, the members of the reading public. It is in the conscience of this public that the authors' only hope lies.

Nothing surprises the library subscriber more than to be told that he is an employer of sweated labour. He is a conscientious citizen who rejoices to discharge his just debts; he has paid his subscription promptly, he will tell you, and what more can be expected of him? That same conscientious citizen will tell you that he refuses to buy cheap Russian butter, timber or what not, "because it is the product of slave-labour." He would be ashamed to be seen entering a shop which notoriously sold shirts made by girls in factories to which they had to sell themselves body and soul for a bare pittance. Yet he will calmly walk into a circulating library and borrow a book.

The circulating library is prepared to lend books to the conscientious citizen at a weekly cost of twopence. A book of the average length costs the author of it at least three months of gruelling mental and physical toil. Even if its intellectual contents be negligible the physical toil remains—to reduce the matter to its very lowest terms. Novels constitute overwhelmingly the major portion of the totality of books borrowed. A novel normally comprises eighty thousand words or more. The reader may easily put the question to a practical test; let him try writing a thousand words per day, seven days a week; let him choose a topic which is familiar to him, so that the mental strain of composition may be reduced to a minimum; in eighty days he will have completed the material for a book—if he has not previously succumbed to sheer exhaustion; there remain ten days out of our postulated three months in which he may revise the proofs, help the publisher to draft "blurbs" and advertising matter and give himself to the rest of the mechanical and business aspects of book production. Readers remain sceptical as to the exhaustion involved in producing eighty thousand words of consecutive and consistent thought until they have actually experienced the labour. If they fight shy of the concrete and personal direct proof they must

accept the assertion on trust; the average book involves the author in three months of sustained labour.

So far we have taken no account of quality; it involves no strain upon the reader's imagination to appreciate that a work of high literary standard, or one calling for statistical and factual research, or one which embodies the fruits of years of study and meditation cannot quite be turned out, sausage-like, from the literary machine of the author's brain once every three months. We are, nevertheless, content to rest our accusation upon the lowest basis of the feeblest novel which the library public demands.

The reader pays the library twopence for the entertainment and/or instruction which he intends to extract from the book. He willingly pays seven times as much to the cinema which loans him the sight of a film, and seven times seven to the theatre proprietor who offers him the elevating spectacle of a series of pairs of ladies' legs moving audaciously in unison across a sensuously-decorated stage. The youth of the nation, both male and female, are thus early taught that in the world of artistic effort book-production is in the lowest class. It is a curious but indubitable fact that we tend to value least that which is provided for us at the cheapest price. Within the realm of books, again, those are rated highest which contrive to provide vicariously the thrills which are more vividly to be gathered in cinema or theatre. But not even the most cunning and lavish pornography really pays the author. The libraries see to that—but not out of moral scruple.

The simple fact is that an author is not financially benefited to any appreciable extent if his book chances to be in demand at the libraries. The twopence paid by the reader is not handed over to him, inadequate though that price would be even if it were passed on to him.

A publisher buys an author's work by paying him "so much down and the rest by way of royalties." In practice this means that except in the case of a very tiny minority of "famous names," who are in a position to bargain with publishers and play off one against the other, the author must accept the standard rates ruling. These are pitifully low; royalties are rarely earned over and above the "so much down." The amount paid down, on the day of publication, ranges from twenty-five to fifty pounds! The average for a novel is thirty pounds. Thirty pounds for three months' work! We pay street scavengers far more. The compositor, the binder, the packer, the carman who delivers, the clerk who makes out invoices—each and every person employed in the publishing business is paid more for his services than the author whose brain, experience and specialized skill alone make their several livelihoods possible.

Over and above the "advance" paid on publication-day the author seldom earns royalties. Yet the publication is a paying proposition to the publisher and to the libraries. The former no longer expects the public to buy for seven shillings and sixpence what it can borrow for twopence; he can make a small but satisfactory profit by catering for the libraries; all he is interested in, therefore, is to turn out a regular number of books, week by week, for library consumption, so that the end of the year sees him with a highly satisfactory total of profits. The latter are anxious to attract a maximum number of readers at a minimum charge; in fact the library subscription is fixed at a purely nominal figure; for libraries are not out to make profits; nevertheless they are not philanthropists; they are adequately remunerated if the reader who enters their premises to borrow a book remains to buy a bottle of medicine—culture combined with cough mixture—or gramophone records, stationery, theatre tickets or any other



of the numerous "sidelines" arrayed before his eyes which he must pass in order to reach the library shelves. Books have degenerated, through the libraries, into being a commercial makeweight—a little something given away to attract custom, very much as packets of hairpins were doled out, in lieu of a farthing change, in the good old days when women used such contrivances.

Circulating libraries, thus viewed from behind the scenes, are exposed as houses of ill repute where literary prostitution procured by prosperous publishers is conducted amidst the odours of respectability. For your library reader is nothing if not eminently respectable; he (or more often she) flourishes in the respectable suburbs and the country towns and resorts where old maids, retired colonels and business men "most do congregate."

We have no space here to dwell upon the moral effects of the libraries' domination over the literary world, involving as it does the banning of "daring" works which make bold excursions in the realms of thought whilst heartily welcoming those which are audaciously pornographic. The undermining of the character of the nation which is begun by the penny press is completed by the twopenny library.

The reading public has it in its power to compel the circulating libraries to restore literature to its rightful status. The first step is to remove authors from the necessity to sell themselves for a starvation pittance. The public must show itself willing, nay determined, to pay more for the privilege of reading—unless it is content to profit by this system of literary exploitation. It is surely not beyond the wit of the reasonable man or the wish of the just man to devise a scheme whereby the author benefits directly according to the number of readers who use his book. The library subscription should be treated merely as a passport into the library; the reader should pay an "entertainments tax" or an instruction fee, whichever you prefer to designate it, for each book borrowed. That fee or tax should be paid over to the author. Literature must cease to be the sweated handmaiden of commerce.

"PORCUPINE."

### Washington A Deist.

In America we are now celebrating the bicentenary of the birth of George Washington. The celebration will last until November. The preachers and religious papers are busy, revamping all of the old myths about him being a pious Christian. But they have not the easy time pulling the old chestnuts out of the fire that they once had. Historical investigation has made great progress during the past dozen years. Some obstreperous infidel comes forward to confute them.

We will give one case for example. The *Milwaukee Journal*, one of the best and most liberal newspapers of the West, published, on the editorial page, a lengthy and splendidly written article on Thomas Paine, detailing his splendid achievements on two continents, giving also a fine reproduction of the Romney portrait. Speaking of Paine's religious views, and of *The Age of Reason*, the *Journal* said, "He was a Deist, of substantially the same religious views held by Jefferson, Franklin and Washington," which, of course, is true. A preacher named Plass rushed into type, saying that while "unfortunately" this was true of Paine, Jefferson and Franklin, it was not true of Washington. We are handicapped in newspaper controversy for want of space, for the reason that religious writers can tell enough lies in four or five lines that require a column to answer properly. This preacher made an alleged quotation from Washington's will in an effort to prove his orthodoxy. Knowing the will did not contain it, and that it was

merely a preacher lie, I challenged him to produce a copy of the will containing it, offering him one hundred dollars if he could do so. We heard no more from him. Others took the question up on both sides, and the advocates of the religiosity of Washington were badly swamped.

Preachers have a habit of manufacturing evidence in their own favour where none exists, and of suppressing it when unfavourable to themselves. As an illustration, I point to a life of Benjamin Franklin, published by the Edinburgh publisher, Nimmo. It eliminates from Franklin's letter to Dr. Ezra Stiles all that Franklin says denying the divinity of Christ.

The United States Government has lent its aid in perpetuating these pious frauds. A bronze tablet on the Sub-Treasury building in Wall Street, New York City, represents the "Father of his Country," on his knees in the snow, engaged in prayer at Valley Forge. In 1928 the Postmaster-General issued \$2,000,000 of postage stamps to commemorate the same lie, which is about as true as the story of Red Riding Hood. When told that it was a lie, his reply was that he was too busy to correct history. Right now, the Government Printing Office in Washington, is spending the peoples' money manufacturing pamphlets filled with bosh in an attempt to prove Washington to have been a Christian.

But the tide has turned. The American people are not all fools, and the pious prevaricators have been taken to task. In 1925, John C. Fitzpatrick published Washington's *Diaries* complete. There it is proved that during fourteen years, at which time at home in Mt. Vernon, with two Episcopal Churches within easy distance, he averaged attending church six times a year! Quite a blow at the priestly assertion some of us have heard from our youth that he was a regular attendant, and would under no circumstances miss "divine services."

The stories of him taking the communion have been riddled. Both Bishop White and the Rev. Dr. Abercrombie, whose churches he attended in Philadelphia, while the Government was located there, deny that he ever took the sacrament, arise and leave the church. Upon being rebuked by the Rev. Dr. Abercrombie, he thereafter absented himself from church on those Sundays. Bishop White says he never heard a word from Washington's lips that would indicate him to be a believer, while Dr. Abercrombie distinctly said, "Washington was a Deist."

The old stories about Washington being a Puritan in his conduct a Sabatarian, etc., have also gone up in smoke. He danced, shook dice and played cards for stakes, attended horse races, the theatre, then the bane of the sanctified. To the great horror of the prohibitionists, he used beer, wine and whisky habitually, though temperately. He conducted a distillery at Mt. Vernon, on which he made in one year, \$200.00, with a large stock left over.

The greatest fraud of all is "George Washington's Prayer for the United States," which the American Episcopal Church has faked up for the glory of God. I first discovered it on the wall of St. Paul's Church, in New York City. It was then new to me, and required some time for me to find its source, but finally I succeeded. Here we give side by side the "prayer," and the material from which it was manufactured:—

The Alleged Prayer:—

*Almighty God, we make our earnest prayer that Thou wilt keep these United States in Thy holy protection, that Thou wilt incline the hearts of the citizens to cultivate a spirit of subordination and obedience to government; to entertain a brotherly affection and love for one another and for their fellow citizens of the United States at large. And finally that Thou wilt most graciously be pleased to dispose us all to do justice, to love mercy and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility and pacific temper of mind which were the characteristics of the Divine Author of our blessed religion, and without an humble imitation of Whose example in these things we can never hope to be a happy nation. Grant our supplication, we beseech Thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Its Source:—

*"I now make it my earnest prayer, that God would have you, and the state over which you preside, in His holy protection; that He would incline the hearts of the*



citizens to cultivate a spirit of subordination and obedience to government; to entertain a brotherly affection and love for one another, for their fellow-citizens of the United States at large, and particularly for their brethren who have served in the field; and finally, that He would most graciously be pleased to dispose us all to justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility and pacific temper of mind which were the characteristics of the divine author of our blessed religion, and without an humble imitation of whose example in these things we can never hope to be a happy nation.

"I have the honour to be, with much esteem and respect, sir, your Excellency's most obedient and most humble servant."—G. Washington.

We have called this "prayer" an "ecclesiastical forgery." Chadman's *Cyclopedia of Law* says, "Forgery consists not only in signing a false name to an instrument, but also in the alteration of an instrument that was otherwise genuine, the rule requiring that the alteration should be in a material part." (Vol. II, p. 93.) We have underlined that portion of the "prayer" that was not a part of the original, while in the original we have underlined the parts which the prayer omits. Here are offences both of omission and commission. Instead of "Sir," with which Washington begins his letter to the governors, the prayer makers have written, Almighty God, we make our earnest prayer, etc." Washington in the original speaks in the first person, singular. He does not speak direct to God, but he makes an earnest prayer, or wish that God will do a certain thing. The prayer makes use of the first person plural and speaks to God direct. They have omitted "and the state over which you preside," and "for their brethren who have served in the field." Instead of Washington's closing, "I have the honour to be, sir, etc.," they have substituted, "Grant our supplication, we beseech Thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord, amen." We think the definition of forgery "that the alteration should be in a material part" is well covered, for these prayer manufacturers have, from an ordinary letter to civil magistrates, eliminated language that would prove it to be such, and in their stead placed words never in the mind of the writer, making the production an appeal to God instead of to man, as it was intended to be. This is all the more apparent when we consider that in all of Washington's voluminous writings the name of Jesus Christ nowhere appears.

To such tactics will clerical mendacity resort.

FRANKLIN STEINER,

Secretary, American Rationalist Association.  
Chicago, Ill., U.S.A.

### Obituary.

GEORGE CHRISTOPHER SANDERS.

We regret to record the death of George Christopher Sanders, which took place on June 27, following a long illness. The remains were cremated at Golders Green Crematorium on Thursday, June 30. Sixty-one years of age at the time of death, George Christopher Sanders spent an active life, and was well known in Trades Union circles as an organizer. His sympathy with the Free-thought movement was always apparent, and was maintained to the very end by his request for a Secular Service in the event of death. The request was duly honoured by the family, and a large assembly filled the Crematorium chapel where a Secular Service was read by Mr. R. H. Rosetti, followed by a musical service by the organist.

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BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand) : 3.15, Mr. S. Burke (Australia).

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Shorrolds Road, North End Road) : 7.30, Saturday, July 9. Messrs. Barnes and Bryant. *Freethinkers* on sale.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead) : 11.30, Sunday, July 10, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. South Hill Park, Hampstead, 8.0, Monday, July 11, Mr. C. Tuson. Leighton Road, Kentish Town, 8.0, Thursday, July 14, Mr. L. Ebury.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park) : 7.30, Sunday, July 10, Mr. C. Tuson. Wednesday, July 13, Cuck Pond, Clapham Old Town, 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury. Friday, July 15, Wren Road, Camberwell Green, 8.0, Mrs. E. Groat.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (outside Technical College, Romford Road, Stratford, E.) : 7.0, Mr. R. H. Rosetti.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park) : Wednesday, July 6, at 7.30, Messrs. Tuson and Wood. Thursday, July 7, at 7.30, Mr. E. C. Saphin. Friday, July 8, at 7.30, Messrs. Bryant and Le Maine. Sunday, July 10, at 12.0, Mr. B. A. Le Maine. 3.30, Platform No. 1, Messrs. Bryant and Wood; Platform No. 2, Messrs. B. A. Le Maine and Tuson. 6.30, Platform No. 1, Messrs. Wood, Tuson and Bryant; Platform No. 2, Messrs. Hyatt and Saphin.

WOOLWICH BRANCH N.S.S. ("The Ship," Plumstead Common) : 7.45, Friday, July 8, Mr. S. Burke (Berkensford Square, Woolwich) : 7.45, Sunday, July 10, Mr. S. Burke will speak.

INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W. C.1) : 11.0, S. K. Ratcliffe—"West and East: The Better Way."

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

BRIERFIELD (Quaker Bridge) : 3.15 and 7.30, Sunday, July 10, Mr. J. Clayton.

CHESTER-LE-STREET (Bridge End) : 8.0, Friday, July 8, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

CRAWSHAWBROOK, 8.0, Wednesday, July 13, Mr. J. Clayton.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. (West Regent Street) : 7.30, Saturday, July 9, to Saturday, July 16, every night (except Sunday). Mr. G. Whitehead. Sunday, July 10, Jail Square, Paisley, 7.30, Mr. G. Whitehead. Helpers urgently needed.

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (Queen's Drive, opposite Walton Baths) : 8.0, Messrs. H. Little and J. V. Shortt. Tuesday, July 12, Edge Hill Lamp, 8.0, Messrs. H. Little and P. Sherwin. Thursday, July 14, corner of High Park Street and Park Road, 8.0, Messrs. A. Jackson, D. Robinson and S. Wollen. Current *Freethinkers* on sale at all meetings.

NEWBIGIN-BY-THE-SEA : 7.0, Saturday, July 9, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

READ, 7.45, Thursday, July 14, Mr. J. Clayton.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Market Place) : 7.0, Wednesday, July 13, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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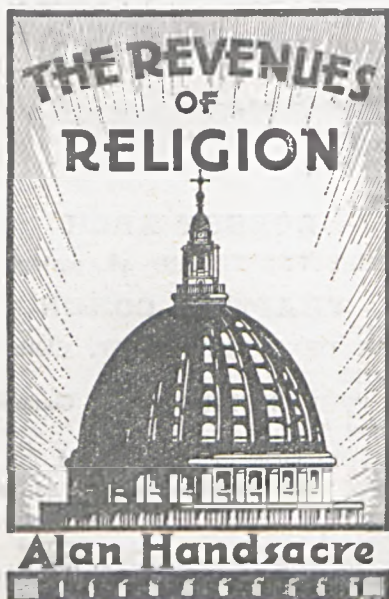
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